

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3-26 now stand in the present application, claims 1, 3-7, 9 and 11-23 having been amended, claim 2 having been canceled, and new claims 24-26 having been added. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-17 and 19-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Du et al. (hereinafter Du) and has rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Du. In view of the above identified claim amendments, the Examiner's §§ 102 and 103 rejections of the claims are believed to have been overcome as will be described in greater detail below.

Applicants have amended the claims to situations where the resources are "workers." The claims as amended are believed to more clearly distinguish over Du on this basis and because it is now clearer that the rejection message is transmitted by the data processing means to the resource interface. Newly added claims 24 and 25 are similar to claims 1 and 10, but are not limited to workers.

More particularly, the claims are now clearly distinguished from Du in that they recite that the rejection signal goes from the data processing means to a second worker interface (or second resource interface) different from a first resource interface from which the rejected availability change proposal was received. It is that feature which allows for the workers (or resources) in a team (or set of resources) to cover for another worker (or resources) which has unsuccessfully sought some time-off (or downtime). Since Du does not teach or suggest this feature, now more clearly required by the

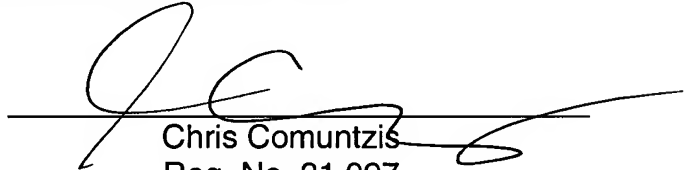
present claims, all of claims 1 and 3-26 are believed to patentably define over the cited reference.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all of claims 1 and 3-26, now standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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